

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-14, 18, 20-24 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 4, 7-9, 18, and 20-21 have been amended.

Claims 6, 15-17, and 19 are canceled without prejudice.

Claims 4 and 17 stand objected to under 37 C.F.R. 1.75 (c) as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim.

In response, Applicants have now amended the above identified claim 4 to remove the stated objections. Claim 17 has been canceled.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe that they have now removed the stated objections to Claim 4 based on 37 C.F.R. 1.75 (c)

Claims 1-5, 12-16, 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shimano et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,388,929) (Shimano).

Applicants have now amended claim 1 to further distinguish their invention from Shimano.

The Office Action states that Claims 6-11 and 19-21 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In order to advance the prosecution of this application and to speed the allowance of the pending claims, Applicants have opted to incorporate in Claim 1 the limitations of Claim 6. Similarly, the limitations of Claim 19 have correspondingly been incorporated in Claim 18.

Thus, Applicants believe that all the amended claims are now free of rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Shimano, and respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the stated claims based thereon.

In view of the foregoing amendments and arguments, Applicants respectfully request that all the rejections and objections to this application be reconsidered and withdrawn and that the Examiner pass all the pending claims to issue.

Should the Examiner have any suggestions pertinent to the allowance of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

GREGORY J. FREDEMAN, ET AL.

by:



H. Daniel Schnurmann
Agent for the Applicants
Registration No. 35,791
Tel. (845) 894 2481